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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JACKY ROSEN, a Senator from the State of Nevada.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, guide our lawmakers through this day with Your higher wisdom. Help them to walk with integrity, reverence, and humility. May they refuse to deviate from the path that honors You.

Lord, open their minds to Your truth as You use them to bring healing to our Nation and world. May they submit their lives to the light of Your precepts, replacing fear with faith, falsehood with truth, and hate with love.

We pray in Your Holy Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, June 24, 2021.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JACKY ROSEN, a Senator from the State of Nevada, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Ms. ROSEN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. SCHUMER. First, I have a message for the information of the Senate.

I understand there is an important meeting at the White House this morning that several Members are attending. So in order to accommodate them, the first vote will start at 10:45 a.m., not at 11 a.m., and we are going to have to move quickly on that vote so people can get their votes done and get to the White House.

So, Members, please take notice.

JUDICIAL NOMINATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, before we reach the conclusion of the June work period, the Senate will confirm yet another one of President Biden's highly qualified nominees to the Federal Bench: Candace Jackson-Akiwumi to serve on the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals.

A graduate of Princeton and Yale Law School, Ms. Jackson-Akiwumi left a career at a big law firm to work for 10 years as a Federal defender in Illinois. She was a voice in the courtroom for Americans who often had no one else to speak for them: the mentally ill, folks who could not afford an attorney.

We have plenty of former prosecutors and corporate lawyers on the bench.

Ms. Jackson-Akiwumi would bring a sorely needed perspective. The more our courts reflect our country as a whole, the more faith Americans will have in the equal application of the law.

Ms. Jackson-Akiwumi will make an outstanding addition to the Seventh Circuit, and I urge all my colleagues to vote for her later today.

Now, I want to reflect for a moment on the pace of judicial nominations in the Democratic-led Senate so far this year. Typically, the first several months of a new administration don't feature a ton of judicial nominations. New Presidents often have ambitious legislative agendas, and it takes a lot of time for a new President to make appointments and to get them to go through all of the background checks and for the Judiciary Committee to advance nominees to the floor. So in administrations past, the first 6 months are a fallow period for judges.

For all the focus that the Republican leader put on judges during the previous administration, the Senate only confirmed one—one district or circuit judge—before July 4 in the first year of Donald Trump's Presidency. By the end of today, the Senate will have confirmed more judges this week than in all 6 months of Donald Trump's first year in office.

In fact, with the confirmations this week, the Senate will have confirmed more district and circuit court judges to the Federal bench in the first 6 months of President Biden's first year than any other administration in 50 years.

Let me say that again so people hear, because I know there is a lot of worry—justified—that President Trump shifted the bench so far to the right that we need to rebalance it, and we need to make that a very high priority. Well, we have. After the confirmation of Ms. Jackson-Akiwumi, the Senate will have confirmed more district and circuit court judges in the first year of a

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Presidency in over 50 years, including the first 6 months of Donald Trump's Presidency. So we are making good, good progress, and we have done it with judges who break the Federal mold—Federal defenders, civil rights lawyers, voting rights lawyers, the first Native American judge, the first Muslim American judge. Those make me proud that we are constantly expanding who in America can get to the bench. All of these folks have one thing in common: They are individuals of impeccable character and impressive credentials.

The Democratic Senate is restoring balance to the judiciary with highly qualified, mainstream jurists who reflect the diversity of this country, and we are going to keep at it when we come back in July and beyond.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on another matter, infrastructure, our Nation's economic potential depends on the quality of its infrastructure. Our businesses, workers, farmers, manufacturers—you name it—they all depend on the infrastructure networks that connect our country. And here in the 21st century, electrical grids and broadband internet access are just as important as roads, bridges, and highways.

But it has been decades—decades—since Congress passed a significant, stand-alone bill to increase Federal investment in infrastructure. Our roads and bridges are crumbling. Children learn in dilapidated schools. Large swaths of rural America lack access to broadband internet.

We need to refashion much of our infrastructure to address the existential threat of climate change. That is so important and essential to the overwhelming majority of my caucus. So the Senate, this summer, is going to move forward on multiple legislative proposals to make historic investments in our Nation's infrastructure. And when we say that, we mean both types of infrastructure: the concrete and steel and that kind of infrastructure—the physical infrastructure—but also the human infrastructure, so that we can maximize the potential of our people which, after all, is our greatest resource—our greatest resource.

So we are pursuing on multiple—we are making two tracks. The first legislative track is bipartisan. The second track will incorporate elements of the American jobs and families plan and will be done through the budget process, which must pass even if it is not bipartisan.

There has been significant progress this week on both tracks.

Yesterday, a bipartisan group of Senators announced that they had reached an agreement in concept for a bipartisan infrastructure proposal, and I have encouraged them to move forward. But I made it explicit to every one of them, together and separately,

that we have to pass both tracks together.

Speaker PELOSI and I were made aware of the concepts of the agreement—the bipartisan agreement—last night. And while we have yet to see the details, I am encouraged by the progress the bipartisan group of Senators has made. I have supported these bipartisan discussions from the beginning, and I want to thank my colleagues for their hard work.

Senate Democrats have also made significant progress on preparing a budget resolution.

These two efforts are tied together. Let me make that clear. The bipartisan infrastructure bill and the budget resolution are tied together. If the Senate is going to move forward with a bipartisan infrastructure bill, we must also move forward on a budget resolution, as well. I have discussed this with President Biden directly on several occasions, and he agrees that we cannot do one without the other, and he has let the participants know that. Speaker PELOSI agrees that we cannot do one without the other. All parties understand that we won't get enough votes to pass either unless we have enough votes to pass both.

When the Senate returns in July, it will be time to take the next step and hold the first votes on the bipartisan infrastructure bill on the floor of the Senate. Senators should also be prepared to consider a budget resolution that will clear the way for the budget reconciliation bill as soon as possible.

The bottom line is, both tracks need to make progress concurrently.

This is about building a foundation for the United States to remain the world economic leader in the 21st century. We are the largest economy in the world, but our infrastructure ranks 13th, behind South Korea, Germany, Japan, and even the United Arab Emirates.

There isn't a community in this country without some glaring infrastructure challenge—certainly, in my home State of New York. If America is going to prosper in the 21st century, we can't have infrastructure that is stuck in the last century.

We need to pass major investment in infrastructure, both physical and human, this year, and I look forward to holding the first votes when we return for the July work period.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

GROWING CLIMATE SOLUTIONS ACT OF 2021

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of S. 1251, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 1251) to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture to develop a program to reduce barriers to entry for farmers, ranchers, and private forest landowners in certain voluntary markets, and for other purposes.

AMENDMENT NO. 2119

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute.)

Mr. LEE. Madam President, I call up my amendment No. 2119 and ask that it be reported by number.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will report the amendment by number.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

The Senator from Utah [Mr. LEE] proposes an amendment numbered 2119.

(The amendment is printed in the RECORD of June 22, 2021, under "Text of Amendments.")

Mr. LEE. Madam President, as Americans want to buy more clean and green products, the market has been finding solutions to provide those products.

The Growing Climate Solutions Act before us, however, will not. Though it seeks to aid the carbon credit market, it could ultimately serve only to quell it. Let's just take a look at how the carbon credit market currently works.

Farmers, ranchers, and private foresters develop these credits to sell by taking actions to either limit their greenhouse gas emissions or to capture greenhouse gas emissions from the atmosphere. They work with technical assistance providers to know how to do so and then with third-party verifiers who make sure that the proper standards are met. Companies can then purchase the credits to offset their carbon emissions, and they can also sell unused credits to other companies wanting to offset their carbon emissions. It is a voluntary exchange and an example of the market working as it ought to work.

As the demand for these credits grows, more farmers, ranchers, and foresters would explore this revenue-generating market, more technical assistance providers and third-party verifiers would emerge, and potentially innovation would occur with new types of entities emerging to create and sell carbon credits beyond these initial three.

So what would the bill do? It would establish a USDA certification program for the technical assistance providers and third-party verifiers involved in creating carbon credits on grounds that it would help small farmers better understand the carbon credit market and know with whom they may work.